

## Height Limits and Exceptions - Placer County Zoning Ordinance, Section 17.54.020

A. **Applicability of Height Limits.** Height limits for buildings and structures are established by Articles 17.06 through 17.52 (Zone Districts and Allowable Land Uses), 17.56 (Specific Use Requirements) and this article (see Sections 17.54.030 for fence height limits, and 17.54.170 et seq., for sign height limits). No building or structure shall be constructed or altered to exceed the height limit established by this chapter, except as otherwise provided by this section.

B. **Measurement of Height.** The height limits for buildings and structures established by Articles 17.06 through 17.52 (Zone Districts and Allowable Uses of Land) and 17.56 (Specific Use Requirements) or other provisions of this code shall be measured as the vertical distance from the highest point of the structure to the average of the highest and lowest points where the exterior walls touch the natural grade, as shown in Figure 17.54-A.

Where building setbacks are tied to the height of a structure (e.g., five-foot side setback for one-story buildings; seven and one-half foot setback for two-story buildings), the structure may be built to the maximum height specified if the setback for that height is provided (this may result in a building that is two stories on one side [with a seven and one-half foot side setback] and one story on the other side [with a five-foot side setback]).

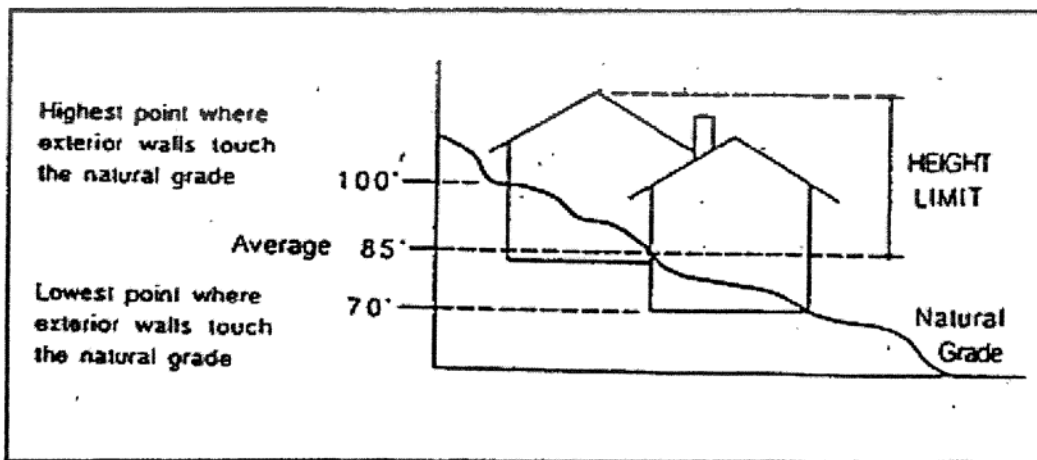


FIGURE 17.54-A  
MEASUREMENT OF HEIGHT

C. **Measurement of Fence Height.** In order for a fence's height to be considered separately from the combined height of a retaining wall and fence, the fence must be located a minimum distance from the retaining wall equal to one-half the combined retaining wall/fence height ( $\frac{1}{2}(x+y)$ ). If the fence is constructed at a distance less than one-half the combined retaining wall/fence height, the fence's height is the distance from the lowest grade elevation at the base of the retaining wall to the highest point on the fence ( $x+y$ ). See Figure 17.54-A-1 below.

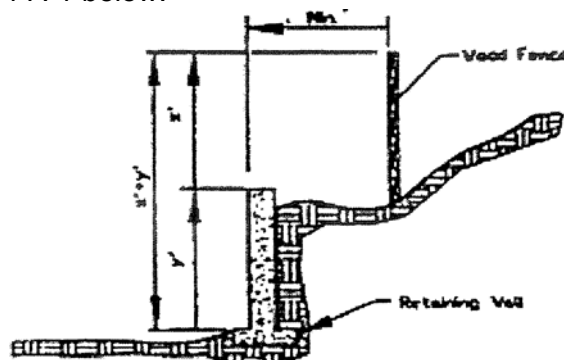


Figure 17.54-A-1

D. **Exceptions to Height Limits.** The height limits for buildings and structures established by this chapter are subject to the following exceptions:

1. **Public and Quasi-public Buildings and Structures.** In a zone district with a height limit of less than fifty (50) feet, public and quasi-public buildings, communications equipment buildings, schools, houses of worship, hospitals, and other institutions permitted in the zone, may be erected to a maximum height of fifty (50) feet; provided, that all required setbacks shall be increased by one foot for each one foot of height that the building exceeds the normal height limit established by the zone.

2. **Hotels, Public and Quasi-public Buildings and Structures.** In a zone district with a height limit of up to fifty (50) feet, hotels, public and quasi-public buildings, communications equipment buildings, schools, houses of worship, hospitals, and other institutions permitted in the zone, may exceed the prescribed height limit if the additional height is authorized through a conditional use permit process that includes an analysis of visual impacts including photo simulations.

3. **Residential Exception—Sloping lots.** The maximum height allowed for a dwelling may be increased when the average natural slope of a proposed building envelope is fifteen (15) percent or more, as follows:

Building Site Slope (%)	Maximum Allowed Height Increase (in feet)
15	5.0
16	5.7
17	6.3
18	7.0
19	7.7
20	8.3
21	9.0
22	9.6
22.5	10.0
23	10.3
24	11.0
25	11.6
26	12.3
27	13.0
28	13.6
29	14.3
≥30	15

The maximum allowed height for a dwelling on a site with slope between fifteen (15) and twenty-two and one-half (22½) percent may be increased over the five feet specified above by the same proportion that the actual site slope exceeds fifteen (15) percent. The maximum allowed height for a dwelling on a site with slope between twenty-two and one-half (22½) and thirty (30) percent may be increased over the ten (10) feet specified above by the same proportion that the actual site slope exceeds twenty-two and one-half (22½) percent.

4. **Exceptions for Specific Types of Structures.**

a. **Architectural Features, Mechanical Equipment.** Chimneys, vents, and other architectural or mechanical appurtenances on buildings may be a maximum of fifteen (15) percent higher than the height limit of the applicable zone.

b. **Freestanding Structures.** Towers, poles, water tanks, and similar structures may be constructed higher than the height limit of the applicable zone if the additional height is authorized through minor use permit approval.

c. **Utility and Communications Facilities.** Individual radio and television receiving antennae, transmission and distribution poles and towers for public utilities are not subject to the height limits of this chapter; however, community receiving antennae and cellular telephone/personal communications services (PCS) facilities and satellite dish antennae are subject to the provisions of Section 17.56.060 (Antennae, communications facilities).

d. **Tahoe Basin.** All structures located within the Tahoe Basin (defined as all of that area of Placer County designated by the Bi-state Compact as being within the jurisdiction of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA)) shall conform to the height requirements as contained in Chapter 22 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances (see Appendix "B"). Where any conflict occurs between Chapter 22 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances and Section 17.54.020 of this code, and where the property lies within the Tahoe Basin as defined above, the provisions of Chapter 22 of the TRPA shall apply (including the method of height measurement contained therein—see Section 22.2.A of the TRPA). (Ord. 5375-B § 10, 2005; Ord. 5339-B (Exh. B) (part), 2004; Ord. 5126-B (part), 2001)